

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02
SS-15 ICA-11 TRSE-00 AID-05 ARA-10 IO-13 ACDA-12
/126 W

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R 261820Z APR 78
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2353
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DJIBOUTI
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
AMEMBASSY LAGOSOO
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 7673

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PBOR, ET, SO
SUBJECT: VISIT OF SOMALI FOREIGN MINISTER TO ITALY

1.SOMALI FOREIGN MINISTER JAMA BARRE MADE A BRIEF VISIT
TO ROME APRIL 22 AND MET WITH FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI.
IN APRIL 26 READOUT OF VISIT, MFA DIRECTOR FOR AFRICAN
AFFAIRS RACHELE REPORTED THAT JAMA BARRE SAID THAT SOVIET
SCHEME TO TAKE OVER HORN OF AFRICA WAS PROCEEDING WITHOUT
DIFFICULTY. MEANWHILE, SOMALIS ARE FRUSTRATED AND DIS-
APPOINTED WITH RESPONSE TO THEIR WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS
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FROM OGADEN. THEY HAD EXPECTED RECIPROCAL WITHDRAWALS BY
SOVIETS AND CUBANS, IMMEDIATE MILITARY AND ECONOMIC AID
FROM THE US, AND WILLINGNESS OF ETHIOPIANS TO NEGOTIATE
SETTLEMENT. INSTEAD, SOVIETS AND CUBANS REMAIN, U.S.
HAS NOT COME THROUGH WITH AID AS EXPECTED, AND ETHIOPIANS
HAVE STIFFENED THEIR PRECONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATIONS.
JAMA BARRE WARNED THAT SOMALIS STILL HAVE OPTION OF RETURN

TO SOVIETS.

2. FORLANI, SAID RACHELE, TOOK "AMERICAN LINE" AND STRESSED THAT SOMALI WITHDRAWAL HAD BEEN COURAGEOUS STEP AND, INDEED, CONSTITUTED FIRST POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN HORN. NOW SOMALIS HAD TO GO FURTHER AND RENOUNCE THEIR CLAIMS ON BEHALF OF SOMALIS EVERYWHERE AND DECLARE THEIR RESPECT FOR BORDERS AND FOR OAU AND UN PRINCIPLES. ESSENTIAL THING IS TO GET NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN SOMALIS AND ETHIOPIANS STARTED TO MAKE DE FACTO SITUATION DE JURE.

3. FORLANI ALSO EXPRESSED CONCERN ABOUT RECENT ETHIOPIAN STATEMENTS ABOUT ACTIVITY IN OGADEN AND ASKED JAMA BARRE ABOUT SOMALI SUPPORT FOR LIBERATION MOVEMENTS WITHIN ETHIOPIA. JAMA BARRE SAID THAT SOMALI GOVERNMENT HAS NO CONTROL OVER THESE GROUPS AND CANNOT BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS. IN ADDITION, JAMA BARRE PLAYED DOWN IMPORTANCE OF APRIL 9 COUP ATTEMPT AGAINST SIAD BARRE, WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED TO PRO-SOVIET SOMALI FORCES.

4. IN SUBSEQUENT GENERAL DISCUSSION OF HORN, RACHELE SAID THAT ITALIANS BELIEVE THAT COUP ATTEMPT WAS UNDERTAKEN BY ALLIANCE OF SENIOR AND JUNIOR SOMALI OFFICERS WHO WERE DISSATISFIED WITH SOMALI WITHDRAWAL FROM THE OGADEN AND THAT SOVIETS WERE COMPLETELY UNINVOLVED. TO
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THE CONTRARY, INSURGENTS FAVORED MORE NATIONALISTIC, PRO-ISLAMIC POSITION. THEY CLAIMED THAT DEFEAT AT JIGJIGA WAS TOTALLY FICTITIOUS AND THAT SIAD BARRE INVENTED IT TO JUSTIFY WITHDRAWAL. IN FACT, ACCORDING TO REBELLIOUS OFFICERS, ORDER TO WITHDRAW WAS WRITTEN TWO DAYS BEFORE BATTLE EVEN BEGAN. RACHELE SAID THAT ITALIANS ARE CONVINCED THAT REBELLIOUS FORCES WERE CONSERVATIVE NORTHERNERS WHO WANTED TO SEE AN END TO SOCIALIST ORGANIZATION OF SOMALIA. FURTHERMORE, ITALIANS BELIEVE THAT SIAD BARRE WOULD BE WILLING TO CONTEMPLATE CHANGES IN DEMOCRATIC DIRECTION, EVEN THOUGH REMAINING LINKS WITH SOVIETS WOULD BE THREATENED, BUT THAT SOUTHERNERS AND POPULATION AROUND MOGADISCIO WOULD NOT ACCEPT MOVEMENT TOWARDS MORE NATIONALISTIC AND PGSIBLY MORE DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT. GARDNER

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